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A

SERMON,

ON THE PRESENT

REVIVAL OF RELIGION, &c.

IN THIS COUNTRY.

Preached at the opening of the Kentucky Synod—1803.

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ISAIAH xxi. 11, 12.

The burden of Dumah. He called to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The Watchman said, the morning cometh, and also the night.

[Concluded from page 409]

2. I SEE, or think I see, a lowering appearance; a proſpect of clouds collecting, which will darken the day, and at length bring on a diſmal night of darkneſs, unleſs it pleaſe God by ſome means or other to diſperſe them.

In ſpeaking of this point, I ſhall not, in my own mind, confine myſelf to any one party or denomination of Chriſtians.

The doctrines taught in this country are, as far as I am acquainted, generally ſound and good; calculated to inſtruct the ignorant, awaken the ſecure, lead awakened ſinners to Chriſt, comfort mourners in Zion, ſtrengthen and eſtabliſh the weak, and lead to holineſs of life. But to me it appears that ſome of our doctrine ſmells too ſtrong of antinomianiſm, ſome of arminianiſm, and that ſome is a heterogeneous mixture of both. Where in deſcribing a work of grace and ſhewing the character of a chriſtian, repentance, faith, love, joy, and other eminent exerciſes are chiefly inſiſted upon, and the nature of goſpel obedience very little explained, inculcated and urged as the proper evidence of a ſound converſion: where a number of moral and religious duties are neglected by profeſſors, and this neglect ſeldom or never pointed out and reproved, there is a great tendency to antinomianiſm. Where the doctrine of the final perſeverance of the ſaints is taught without diſtinctly ſhewing wherein it conſiſts—without ſhewing that it conſiſts in going on from one degree of ſtrength to another, in a life of faith, love and goſpel obedience: taught ſo as to induce people to believe that converſion, or a good ſet of experiences, is all: that once in covenant and always in covenant, let a perſon live as he will: I ſay when perſeverance is taught in ſuch a manner as to lead to this, there is at leaſt a ſtrong tincture of antinomianiſm. Perhaps the preacher would not teach this doctrine in expreſs terms, but if he teach it in words that tend to this, it amounts to nearly the ſame thing.

Some, on the other hand, ſeem to me to hold out life and ſalvation to be obtained on certain conditions, to be performed in obedience to ſome new law of grace; which doctrine, if carefully examined, will appear to make ſalvation as truly impoſſible to depraved man, as it is by the old law or covenant of works. Great comfort and conſolation is held out to believers, on condition of their faithfulneſs, without informing them in what that faithfulneſs conſiſts, what degree of it is requiſite, or ſuggeſting any ſufficient reaſon for them to hope they will continue faithful. This appears to me to be conſolation which no well informed chriſtian, who knows his own heart, poſſibly can, or dare to take. Give me no better foundation to reſt my hopes upon than this, and I muſt ſink into black deſpair. I had rather derive my conſolation from this promiſe of God to his people: that they ſhould be kept by his power, not in unbelief, but through faith unto ſalvation.

Sometimes there is in our diſcourſes a ſtrange heterogeneous mixture of antinomianiſm, arminianiſm, and I may add, calviniſm: calviniſm, perhaps, in the beginning, antinomianiſm in the middle, and arminianiſm at the end of a ſermon; which mixture muſt make a ſtrange appearance to a well informed mind, who has adopted any well digeſted conſiſtent ſyſtem.

The important ſcripture doctrine of divine influences in a work of conviction, converſion and ſanctification, is, I believe, generally taught in our land. But ſome, if I underſtand them right, approach too near to the repreſenting of it as a mere mechanical work, without conſidering the word of God as the mean by which the Spirit works in producing the excellent effect. Others again, if I take them up right, leave in this work but very little for the Divine Spirit to do, after the inſpiration of the holy Scriptures.* Both theſe, I apprehend, are departures from the principles of the reformation, and, what is more, departures from the written word of God; for true chriſtians are born again, not of corruptible ſeed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth, and abideth forever: they are born of the Spirit, created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works.

The religion which is taught and embraced among us, is experimental. Indeed, that religion which is not experienced, is of little value, and will finally be of no advantage.—But while we are teaching this experimental religion, too little attention is paid to the practical part. Faith, love, repentance, which are commonly called the graces of the Holy Spirit, becauſe wrought by his agency, are earneſtly inculcated; but humility, meekneſs, temperance, brotherly kindneſs, their inſeparable concomitants, together with an uniform holy practice, are too ſeldom mentioned, and too ſparingly inſiſted on. This fault may be obſerved in the converſation of profeſſors on religious experiences, and in experimental preaching. It ſtops too ſoon: it leaves out ſome important, and I may ſay eſſential properties of a ſound converſion.

* The truth is, the Spirit works by the word. One extreme is, the word works without the Spirit, (that is, the third perſon of the Trinity.) The other extreme is, the Spirit works without the word. The firſt of theſe extremes leads to legality, and is a ſtep towards denying the perſonality of the Holy Ghoſt: the other leads to enthuſiaſm.

As to diſcipline, I fear a wrong method is taken in admitting young members to communion: a method that is diſhonouring to religion and injurious to the ſouls of men. It often buoys them up with a vain conceit that they are true chriſtians, when there is no proper evidence that they underſtand what chriſtianity is. Too diſproportionate a regard is paid to experiences; too little to knowledge and ſound profeſſion. They are ſaid to be received into communion on the profeſſion of their faith, when properly ſpeaking they have never made a profeſſion of the eſſential doctrines of chriſtianity. Some are admitted who do not underſtand the firſt principles of chriſtianity, and who make no profeſſion of its eſſential doctrines. It does not appear from all they ſay whether they believe there is one or more Gods; or that Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God; or that there will be a reſurrection and future judgment; or that they underſtand what is the nature and uſe of the ordinances of baptiſm, and the Lord's ſupper. Now this I think is altogether without ſcripture warrant, contrary to the dictates of reaſon, and diſhonouring to the religion we profeſs; eſpecially where the important buſineſs of catechiſing is as much neglected as it is in our country.

If this duty of catechiſing is neglected a little longer, we are in great danger of being overſpread with a dark cloud of ignorance....Ignorance of the fundamental doctrines and duties of that religion, which we profeſs to believe. The care Preſbyterians have formerly taken in teaching youth the firſt principles of religion, has been of great advantage, not only to themſelves, but alſo to other denominations, and to the common cauſe of chriſtianity. Even thoſe who cenſure them for their head knowledge, have reaſon to bleſs God, that they have been ſo careful to preſerve it: for others, while they have been ſpeaking againſt it, enjoy in ſome meaſure, the benefit of it: the benefit ſilently and inſenſibly diffuſed itſelf among them.

Here let me obſerve, that though we do not fully approve of the Engliſh hierarchy, and of the opulence of ſome of the Engliſh clergy, yet we have all reaſon to be thankful to the great Ruler of the world and of the church, that there has been ſuch a ſet of men raiſed up in the chriſtian world, as the Engliſh biſhops. They have been in the courſe of divine providence, the great bulwark which has defended the chris-

tian cauſe againſt the many formidable and violent attacks of its foes. Men in the vale of poverty, never could procure the neceſſary means of defence, that extenſive knowledge requiſite for the purpoſe. But this by the bye.

In the government of church members, I think, a laudable care has been taken by all denominations to reſtrain and diſcountenance what is eſteemed groſs immorality, by excluding the openly vicious from their communion. I fear, however, proper attention has not been paid to families. Children and ſervants are ſuffered to live in ignorance of the firſt principles of religion; and the authority which God has given to the heads of families for edification is not uſed, as it ought to be, for the ſuppreſſing of vice, and encouragement of piety and virtue. Servants are allowed to ſquander away the ſacred hours of the Sabbath in idleneſs and wickedneſs. This is ſogeneral, that if an individual attempts to govern his ſervants as he ought to do, his attempt is fruſtrated by the example of others. The liberty we take, and allow our families to take, on the Sabbath day, without any notice or reſtraint, would induce a ſtranger to believe we were generally become anti-ſabbatarians. The holy Sabbath is in fact a day devoted to the ſervice of the fleſh and the devil, and is the occaſion of children, ſervants and others, improving in the knowledge and practice of vice, beyond what they, without a Sabbath, would ever attain to. That which in itſelf, and in the end of its inſtitution, is a great bleſſing, is perverted and turned into a curſe. To have our youth trained up in the knowledge and practice of religion and ſound morals, is a matter of great importance to civil and religious ſociety. This is too little attended to by churches and their officers; which omiſſion is glaringly abſurd, eſpecially in thoſe who practice infant baptiſm.

Church officers, in the exerciſe of diſcipline, attend to the honour of religion and credit of the chriſtian profeſſion; but do not always aim enough at the repentance, reformation and ſalvation of offenders. The end of diſcipline is not merely to purge the church by caſting out offenders; but alſo by bringing them back to the boſom of the church by repentance and reformation. Here I think we are often, if not always deficient. We take up a bad opinion of an offender, loſe our affection for him, and therefore neglect our duty.

Thus have I given you a view, according to my beſt information, of the ſtate of religion in this ſtate. *The morning cometh and alſo the night.*

But is the morning of the millennium at hand? Is the latter day glory approaching? the time when "the ſtone that was cut out of the mountain without hands, ſhall break in pieces the iron, the clay, the braſs, the ſilver, and the gold, and become a great mountain filling the whole earth."

This queſtion is too deep for me: "the times and ſeaſons the Father hath reſerved in his own power." Allow me on this occaſion to venture a conjecture or two. I anſwer, *not very near.* My reaſons for this are,

1. The kingdom of Chriſt is a kingdom of peace and love; and there is too little of this temper found among chriſtians, and even among chriſtian miniſters. There is too much of a ſpirit of party, and diſpoſition for party debates. Miniſters and other chriſtians are too apt to be endeavouring to expoſe to ridicule their chriſtian brethren, who do not think, in ſome points, like themſelves. There evidently appears a diſpoſition to hunt for proſelytes, and not that open, candid ſpirit, which is neceſſary for union of endeavours in promoting the kingdom of Chriſt. Though I hope there is leſs of this temper prevailing now, than there was a few years ago, There is too much pride, ſelf-confidence and cenſorioufneſs among profeſſors, and too little meekneſs, forbearance, and of that "charity which hopeth all things," for us to expect that glorious day near at hand.

2. The cuſtom of drinking ardent ſpirits, not as a medicine, but to pleaſe the taſte, to comply with faſhion, or to ſhew generoſity, is too common and prevalent among profeſſors; and too many of them are employed in furniſhing that pernicious bane to the morals of mankind. Profeſſors muſt be cured of this evil before we can rationally expect to ſee that glorious morning, They muſt find ſomething elſe to do with the ſurplus of their wealth, and lay it up as treaſure in heaven.

3. The wealth and the honours of this world are too highly rated, and too much eſteemed by profeſſors. They purſue wealth with a view to their own and their children's worldly aggrandiſement; with a view to the elegancies and the luxuries of life; and not with a view to laying up treaſure in heaven; not to relieve the wants and real neceſſities of the poor;

not to assist in propagating the gospel through the world; not in training up promising youth, that they may be qualified for the important services of Christ's church; not in sending out missionaries to the poor heathen, who "sit in darkness and the shadow of death." Some are so bent upon the pomps or elegancies of life, as to involve themselves in debt, and neglect to do justice to their creditors by discharging their obligations. Professors do very little more for promoting the kingdom of God by their wealth than others, and seem to be as insensible of their obligations to "honour the Lord with their substance." It is true there have lately been some noble examples set in England, and some in America; but the generality of wealthy professors seem inclined to look on and commend these examples, rather than to realise themselves under any obligations to imitate them. We have some preachers among us, who have so great a regard to the cause of Christ as to sacrifice their worldly prospects, the interest of their families, their ease, and the health of their bodies in order to promote it. But others, in much more affluent circumstances, look on, commend them as examples of disinterestedness, and seem to think they have no more to do with the matter, and that their estates were given them merely for worldly purposes. Let others labour, and spend, and suffer in the cause of Christ; as for them, they mean to go to heaven by praying and singing, repenting and believing. I think a different spirit will be found among professors, before the gospel takes a general spread in the world.

4. It appears to me probable, that before the millennium there will rise up a set of evangelical preachers, who will more fully realise that the kingdom of Christ is not of this world; and so disengage themselves from national attachments and political connexions, as to look upon themselves, and to be looked upon by others, as citizens of the world at large, and equally friends to every nation under heaven; and thus find a more easy access to every part of the world, without suspicion of any political intrigue or mischievous design: and that by exemplifying and inculcating the christian spirit, they will be the instruments of uniting the nations of the earth in love, and destroying that national pride and those animosities, which have long deluged the world in blood. Mankind will then

live in love and "learn war no more." The hiſtories of heroes will ceaſe to be admired—The Nebuchadnezzars, the Alexanders, the Marlboroughs, the Cromwells and the Bonapartes will no longer be ſet up as examples, in forming the morals of youth. The hiſtory of Jeſus Chriſt and of the Apoſtle of the Gentiles will be greatly preferred before them.

5. Another reaſon, and none of the leaſt, for my thinking the millennium not very near, is the prevalence of arbitrary power in the world; and particularly that the profeſſors of chriſtianity are not rightly diſpoſed to "break every yoke and let the oppreſſed go free." They are ſo attached to the idol, intereſt, that they find not in their hearts to do juſtice in this reſpect, to "do as they would be done by." Their judgments are in favour of it, but they have not hearts to act; they will not adopt and purſue any rational plan for accompliſhing the righteous purpoſe. For my own part, I have no hopes that the world will enjoy the bright beams of this glorious morning, while this iniquity abounds and is practiſed by chriſtians.

1. Let us return humble thanks and praiſe to a gracious God and Redeemer, that he has in any meaſure revived the things that remained, that were ready to die. I believe that the uncommon largeneſs of our aſſemblies, and eſpecially on ſacramental occaſions, and the extraordinary appearances and exerciſes on theſe occaſions, have induced many to believe the revival to be much greater than it is, or ever has been; yet I am ſatisfied from my own obſervation, that there are a goodly number, who have been and are flocking to Jeſus as doves to their windows, and turning from the practice of vices of various kinds, to walk in the paths of virtue; and the face of ſome whole neighbourhoods changed for the better. Though it is a truth much to be lamented, that there are multitudes among us, who remain careleſs and quite negligent of the one thing needful: many appear to be hardening in ſin—many going on in the broad road of vice and impiety to deſtruction; many looking up in obſtinate prejudices, riſing from their diſlike to vital religion, ſtrengthened by the imprudent zeal of ſome honeſt friends to the cauſe, and ſome carried away with enthuſiaſtic errors, yet many of the profeſſors of religion have been much quickened, revived and comforted, and are now rejoicing in God as the portion of their ſouls; and many poor ſinners, as I intimated, are flocking to Jeſus as

doves to their windows, and turning to the Lord. Praiſe ye the Lord, and magnify him forever. Eſpecially let us glorify his name by living the lives of chriſtians, and following the example of the Lord Jeſus; this is the beſt way of expreſſing our thanks, and praiſing his gracious name.

2. It is matter of joy and thankfulneſs to find ſo much of a ſpirit of prayer and ſupplication among the people of God. Let us endeavour to cultivate it more and more. At the ſame time we ſhould diſtinguiſh between the humble, ſolemn, fervent pleadings of faith, and a bold noiſy kind of earneſtneſs; at the ſame time making proper charitable allowances for difference of custom, in different places and ſocieties. In general, where there is moſt of this ſpirit of prayer among chriſtians, there are the moſt ſinners inquiring what they ſhall do to be ſaved: the moſt converts to God, and the moſt added to the communion of the church. Let us endeavor to pray without ceaſing, with all manner of prayer and ſupplication: and not found our hopes upon appearances, but upon the grace and power of God, and the merits and interceſſion of Jeſus Chriſt. Let us not limit the holy One of Iſrael; but perſevere in our duty; contented that God ſhould work when and how he pleaſes.

3. Let us honeſtly and carefully ſearch into and find out every thing which has a tendency to bring on a gloomy night, lamenting before God with deep humility and penitence of heart, and diligently labour to reform. Let the people ſtrive to find out whatever miſtakes they have run into; whatever duties they have neglected; whatever has been amiſs in their temper and conduct, and endeavour to reform without delay. Let us all engage with all our hearts in preſent incumbent duty; miniſters labour faithfully in diſcharge of the various duties of their function, and the people encourage and ſupport them in it, with cheerfulneſs of heart. Let us carefully avoid that ſpiritual pride, which puffs up the mind with vain conceit, and ſelf confidence; that enthuſiaſm that leads the mind away from the ſacred oracles, to follow the rovings of a diſordered imagination, as the infallible guidance of the holy ſpirit; and that ſpirit of contention with our brethren of whatever name, which grieves the ſpirit of God, and deſtroys love and peace. If we are obliged to contend earneſtly for the truth,

let us do it in meekneſs and love, never returning railing for railing.

4. I would take the liberty to ſay a few words to thoſe who diſlike the preſent work, and are turned oppoſers. I eſteem it the highest of uncharitableneſs, to treat all who oppoſe this work as oppoſers of the life and power of religion. Thoſe who take different views of the ſame ſubject, form different views about it, and conſequently obſerve a different conduct with relation to it. I believe ſome of the ſincere friends of the work, have more effectually injured it by unguarded addreſſes and raſh cenſures, than thoſe oppoſers have by all they have ſaid and done. The Lord pity and forgive human weakneſs! It is poſſible there may be ſome who would be pleaſed and happy, could they be perſuaded the preſent revival was a real revival of true religion: but they ſee, or rather hear, of ſo many things which appear to them incapable of being reconciled to reaſon or ſcripture, that they cannot draw the pleaſing concluſion. As to ſuch, I would recommend it to them honeſtly to labour to diveſt themſelves of all the prejudices they have imbibed; to endeavour to make all the allowances they reaſonably can for human weakneſs and miſtakes; to pay no regard to flying ſtories, eſpecially reports of thoſe who are violent oppoſers; get acquainted with, not one or two, but a number of the ſubjects of this work; come near the object, view it impartially and on every ſide, particularly try to make yourſelves acquainted with thoſe things, the report of which, has given you the greateſt diſgust. Then you may probably ſee reaſon to believe it to be a work of divine grace, may heartily own and encourage it, though you may not like ſeveral attending circumſtances. Perhaps there never has been a revival of religion ſince the days of pentecost, free from all blemiſhes. You will not be diſpoſed to deny the charms of a beautiful lady, becauſe ſhe has one or two ſtains on her dreſs.

Others are oppoſers of this work, becauſe it oppoſes them. It oppoſes the religion of ſome and will not let them reſt. They think they are chriſtians, and know they are eſteemed ſo by others. They have long entertained hopes of heaven and immortal glory; and have had the reputation of worthy reſpectable members of the church on earth. Shall they now give up all their hopes of heaven and reputation on earth;

and ſet themſelves down as poor law condemned, unconverted ſinners. This they muſt do if theſe people are in the right: If theirs is true religion, they are total ſtrangers to it. Here is ſomething very hard to ſwallow, and equally hard to digeſt. This makes them wiſh to find as many faults as they can, and ſets them to hunting for them with diligence; they commonly prove too ſucceſsful; they find ſome diſorder in the worſhip of theſe people, ſomething that appears whimſical or enthuſiaſtic, ſome wrong ſentiments, or ſome irregularity of conduct. This greatly comforts their hearts, and gives them a violent hatred of the new religion. They purſue it bitterly, as a man purſues his enemy. They do not mourn over these faults of their fellow creatures, they uſe no means to reclaim them; but frequently mention their faults with bitterneſs and triumph. If any of this deſcription are now hearing me, let me adviſe you my dear friends, ſeriouſly to pauſe and conſider what you are about. Are you not oppoſing a work of God's in defence of your own falſe hopes; have you any ſcriptural evidence that you have any better religion than this you are oppoſing; do you feel the exerciſe of it in your hearts, and do you manifeſt it in your lives? Perhaps you are offended at ſome expreſſing an aſſurance of their gracious ſtate, and think it nothing but pride and deluſion. If you can live without aſſurance, is it not a ſtrong argument that you are void of the fear of God? Is it matter of offence to you, that thoſe who are juſtified, adopted, and ſanctified, ſhould have aſſurance of God's love, peace of conſcience, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt?

This work oppoſes the vices of others, and therefore they cannot bear it. It ſheds a glare of light upon their conſcience that is intolerable. They were living ſecure and eaſy in ſin; hoping they ſhould have peace, though they add drunkenneſs to thirſt, and committed other open iniquities. "The doctrine preached among this people, is ſo terrible: it repreſents ſin as ſo great an evil, my conduct ſo very ſinful, the anger of God ſo intolerable, hell ſo awful; that if it is true, I am undone forever." This ſtirs up the mind and ſets it in ſearch of falſe doctrines, of deluſions, of blunders in profeſſors, of hypocrites, of any thing that will undervalue the work, eaſe the conſcience, and embolden the mind in ſin. Let me aſk ſuch, is it worſe to be repenting, forſaking ſin, flying from

the wrath to come, crying for mercy, hearing ſermons, praying and ſinging praiſes to God; and even to ſpend whole days and nights at theſe exerciſes; than in debauchery, curſing and ſwearing, drinking and revelling, gaming and cheating, quarrelling and fighting, or even fiddling and dancing? If the meſſenger, death, ſhould be ſent for you, which of theſe ſcenes would you rather be engaged in? From which would you rather ſtep out of time and appear at the bar of a holy God? If the former, ſtop: you are not only oppoſing this work, but you are oppoſing the light of your own conſcience, and fighting againſt your own ſouls. Whether theſe people be right, or no, you are certainly wrong; you are ſinners not only condemned by the doctrine they preach, and which is found in ſacred writ, but alſo by your own conſciences. At leaſt let theſe people alone; turn your attention to yourſelves, and ſeek ſalvation in earneſt, or you are undone forever.

5. Let us miniſters, as well as others, honeſtly inquire into our own miſtakes, our omiſſions of duty, and our errors in conduct. Let us realize the great danger of provoking the Lord to withdraw his divine influences, and leave us and our people in darkneſs. If in any places, or in any meaſure, he has forſaken us and diſowned our labours, let us inquire with humble and ſincere hearts, whether it be not our faults; and if it is, let us repent, confeſs, forſake and reform. Inſtead of giving ourſelves up to deſpondency and diſcouraging complaints, let us in humble dependence on divine grace, exert all our powers to promote a clearer knowledge, and a more rational, ſcriptural, deep, ſolemn and abiding ſenſe of true practical religion on our hearts. Since this work began, I have heard much ſaid of, and againſt oppoſers; but let us, who profeſs to be friends to it, take heed leſt we ourſelves make not the moſt ſucceſsful oppoſition to this gracious and glorious work of God. If we ſlacken in the work, if we leave the altar and ſerve mammon, if we get to running after new notions, if we give ourſelves up to deſpondencies, if we are ſtrenuous to defend every circumſtance attending this work, as if eſſential to it; if we ſpend our time in cenſuring others, and biting and devouring one another, if we repreſent all as oppoſers of true religion, who are not pleaſed with every thing, and pronounce damnation upon them, we moſt effectually injure the cauſe ourſelves. In my opinion, all the

oppoſers on earth or hell will never ſtop the work, or prevent its happy effects, if we do not contribute our part to the oppoſition.

Let us be united in chriſtian love and affection, like a band of brothers, all engaged in purſuit of one great object, the promotion of the kingdom of God's grace. Let us ſtudy to preſerve unity in the faith, as much as poſſible; be of one mind and of one heart.

My opinion is, that the ſcheme of doctrines commonly called THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE; the ſcheme of doctrine that produced the reformation from the great apoſtacy, that was ſupported and defended by the reformers, that is found in the confeſſions of the reformed churches of Germany, of the United Netherlands, of Bohemia, of Scotland, of England, &c. that has produced every noted revival from the reformation to the preſent day, and which we have adopted at our licenſure or ordination, is entitled to great reſpect. I do not pretend to juſtify every ſentiment, much leſs every expreſſion, of theſe firſt reformers; yet I will ſay, that every different ſcheme which has fallen under my notice, while I was capable of inveſting them, has appeared to me deficient or ſelf-inconſiſtent. This ſcheme has been examined by the ableſt men, and has ſtood the teſt for hundreds of years, and I think will, until the great burning day. There have been revivals where other doctrines have been mixed with theſe; but theſe have been taken into, and make an eſſential part of every ſucceſsful ſcheme.

If I am rightly informed, when the Preſbyterians in England forſook this ſyſtem, religion among them ſoon languiſhed, and their particular churches ſunk into contempt, and almoſt into non-exiſtence. In ſome of them the old religion was revived, and the doctrines of grace again preached; on which theſe churches aroſe almoſt from the dead, and became flouriſhing ſocieties. The eſtabliſhed churches of England and Ireland, how did they loſe the ſpirit of piety when theſe doctrines were relinquiſhed! But a few years ago, when a number of miniſters revived the ancient ſyſtem, the life and power of religion again appeared among them. Thus it has been—and thus I think it will be, whenever the experiment is tried.

In the beginning of the American revolution, what wiſdom was there in the American counſels, and in their determinati-

ons! How deeply and wiſely did they inveſtigate the rights of men and the principles of government! Was it becauſe they were better and wiſer men than ever exiſted before? No: but becauſe they knew that on the principles they then adopted, the line of conduct they then purſued, depended their political ſalvation; that they were to live or die by theſe principles. The neceſſity of theſe circumſtances made them wiſe and faithful. When this neceſſity was removed, independence eſtabliſhed and peace obtained, they ſoon began to jar and claſh; one adopted one ſyſtem and another another; and the Americans did not appear to be wiſer than other people. In a ſimilar ſituation were the firſt reformers. By the principles of religion which they then adopted they were to die. They therefore laboured thoroughly to examine every article, to try them by the written word, and take nothing upon truſt.—When this neceſſity was removed, men ran into various errors and inconſiſtencies, and often do ſo ſtill, to the great corruption of the truth, diſhonour of religion, and injury of the ſouls of men. But I think, whenever religion revives and flouriſhes, there is a recurrence to firſt principles, and the ancient ſyſtem of doctrine again comes into credit. I do not mean that we ſhould be confined to ancient ſyſtems, and not inquire and judge for ourſelves. This we ought to do; but do it with proper modeſty, deliberation and diligence; and never try to diſtinguiſh ourſelves by advancing new notions, poorly digeſted, and but half underſtood. Eſpecially ſhould innovations in doctrines be avoided, as much as poſſible, in a time of revival; for they naturally tend to check a revival, by turning the ſpirit of it into a ſpirit of diſputation. They ſet the minds of men in motion to find out arguments for and againſt the new opinions, and thereby turn off the attention from the "one thing needful," and deſtroy the life and power of godlineſs; at leaſt it deſtroys that mutual love and confidence that ſhould unite the hearts of chriſtians, and eſpecially chriſtian miniſters.

My dear brethren, it is very probable that this is the laſt time I ſhall ever addreſs you, in the character of a Moderator of any of your judicatures; therefore indulge me a little longer in venting the affectionate feelings of my heart. I would acknowledge with ſenſibility, that you have for many years treated me with that reſpect which is due to a father *in the*

church: and though I have been conſcious of the weakneſs of a younger brother, I have felt, and do feel, ſomething of that affection for you, and anxious care for your happineſs, credit and uſefulneſs, that becomes a father.

The evidence I have had, amidſt the infirmities incident to human nature, of your faithfulneſs and integrity, eſpecially in tranſacting the buſineſs of our eccleſiaſtical courts, has given me peculiar ſatisfaction. Go on with increaſing faithfulneſs and wiſdom. Through the moſt unmerited goodneſs of God, we have had ſome "times of refreſhing from the preſence of the Lord." I congratulate you on this account, and call upon you to join in giving thanks and praiſe to a God of infinite love, that he has condeſcended in any meaſure to own and bleſs the labours of ſuch unworthy creatures as we know ourſelves to be. Let former inſtances of his goodneſs encourage your hearts to perſevere in the way of your duty; and endeavour to go on with increaſing diligence and faithfulneſs. In a little while I ſhall go hence, and the place which knows me now will know me no more: but the thought that when I am laid in the ſilent grave, you will ſurvive, and be labouring to promote the kingdom of God's grace and the ſalvation of precious ſouls, is a pleaſing, comfortable thought to me under the decline of nature.

Endeavour to improve yourſelves in knowledge as far as you can; and eſpecially in the knowledge of the ſacred ſcriptures and the human heart. This you ſhould do not only for the benefit of others, that you may be maſter builders, who need not be aſhamed, rightly dividing the word of truth; but alſo for your own perſonal benefit: that you may know and do the will of God, that you may imbibe more and more of the chriſtian temper, and be more fully caſt into the goſpel mould. The knowledge that miniſters ſhould ſearch for, ſhould be all practical, or ſubſervient ſomehow to holy practice. The reformation of their own hearts and lives, and thoſe of their fellow men, ſhould be the great object of all their ſtudies and labours. Leave other things to other men: leave agriculture and the mechanic arts to farmers and mechanics: leave war and the government of nations to ſoldiers and politicians, and attend chiefly to the reformation of the principles and practices of men, and the ſalvation of their ſouls. Improve in knowledge while you are capable of it, leſt you ſhould, as I have done, lament the want of it when it is too late. Do not

let ſtraitened circumſtances, or any other conſideration, induce you to entertain your people with empty, looſe, indigeſted harangues, in your ſtated public addreſſes to them. Avoid this as far as you poſſibly can. It has been a great ſatisfaction to me ſince the preſent revival, to find that my brethren have ſo generally avoided this method, that they were careful to fill their diſcourſes with uſeful, important matter. I rejoiced the more in this, becauſe in times of revival the temptation to this method is very ſtrong; and when miniſters give way to it, they thereby ſuſtain an injury which they ſcarcely recover all their days.

Endeavour as well and as faſt as you can, in preſent circumſtances, to train up a pious, ſenſible, prudent and learned miniſtry. You know my ſentiments are not ſo rigid as ſome about what is called a liberal education: yet I am fully perſuaded of the utility and importance of learning; of much more learning than moſt of us are poſſeſſed of. None complain that this food is bitter, but thoſe who never taſted it. Should the Preſbyterians adopt the ſame plan in this reſpect, that ſome other ſocieties have done, and ſhould it thereby become general, it would undoubtedly be a great injury, not only to our church, but to other churches alſo, to the general intereſt of chriſtianity. Many preachers who neglect learning, and ſome who ſeem to deſpiſe it, and undervalue thoſe who poſſeſs it, are themſelves indebted to the learned for the advantages they enjoy. Had all been of their opinion, and acted on their principle, we and they ſhould have been ſitting together in heathen darkneſs this day.

If you ſhall at any time be evil ſpoken of, whether by profeſſed friends or avowed foes, whether they be of the ſame or a different denomination; whether they be atheiſts, deiſts, or chriſtians, firſt inquire honeſtly, whether their charges againſt you are juſt or not. If juſt, receive the reproof as from a friend, and reform without delay. If unjuſt, never ſeek to be revenged, nor retaliate in kind; live the ſlander out of countenance, and think no more about it. Set your faces like a flint, and perſevere in ſpite of every difficulty and diſcouragement in that great and truly honourable employment to which you are called.

Think but little of worldly dignity, and ſeek not to be called of men Rabbi. The true dignity of a goſpel miniſter is

diligence, faithfulneſs, meekneſs and love; a Chriſt-like temper and conduct, and many ſeals to his miniſtry. It does not conſiſt in fine horſes, clothes, houſes, furniture, or ſounding titles. It does not conſiſt in being ſkilled in the arts of war, in being great politicians or wiſe ſtateſmen; but in the knowledge of the ſacred ſcriptures, and ſkill to direct men to heaven and immortal glory. In a word, the true dignity of a goſpel miniſter, is to be like the deſpiſed Nazarene.

Be ye faithful unto death, and you ſhall receive a crown of life. In a little time you ſhall ſurmount every difficulty, you ſhall conquer every foe. Sin and all its terrible effects ſhall be forever done away; all the weakneſſes, the pains, the labours, the toils, and the various temptations of life ſhall forever ceaſe—You ſhall ſit down with Abraham, Iſaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, and ſpend a happy and glorious eternity in the full fruition of God. In thoſe regions of perfect purity and peace, I hope and expect to find an humble ſeat among you, fit for one who is leſs than the leaſt of all ſaints; and ſpend an eternity in celebrating the praiſes of redeeming love, and adoring all the perfections of the Deity.—I would now collect all the powers of my ſoul, and bid you an affectionate farewell! Finally, my brethren, farewell!

[*From the Connecticut Evangelical Magazine.*]

THOUGHTS
ON THE SINNER'S CONTROVERSY WITH GOD.

THAT men have a controverſy with God, is abundantly taught by his word. The ſame is fairly inferred, from the evil of their doings. The apoſtolic exhortation would be pertinent on no other ground: 2 Cor. v. 20. *Now then we are ambaſſadors for Chriſt; as though God did beſeech you by us, we pray you in Chriſt's ſtead be ye reconciled to God.*

The ſubjects of divine grace were once enemies; for they were by nature children of wrath, even as others. Accordingly ſaith the apoſtle to the Coloſs. i. 21. And you, who were ſome time alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled. The ſame apoſ-

tle to the Romans ſays, *The carnal mind is enmity againſt God.* But multitudes, who yield ſome general aſſent to the truth and importance of revealed religion, have never been convinced, that *they* were enemies to the true character of Jehovah, and thence engaged in an unrighteous controverſy with him. This however, may be true in fact, though they never were convinced of it; and even though they imagine, that their whole heart is right with God. Men are naturally blind to themſelves. It is an high attainment, for any one, to know the plague of his own heart. Men are liable to remain ignorant of their controverſy with God, by thinking him altogether ſuch an one as themſelves. To think thus of God, is natural to all men, as ſinners. In this miſtake they would always continue, unleſs it were rectified by a conviction of the truth. Men are often kept in blindneſs, as to their controverſy with God, and the enmity of their hearts towards him, by a groundleſs perſuaſion of his love to them, and that this love will, eventually, ſecure their happineſs. So long as they remain in this miſtake, it will be as impoſſible to convince them, that they are enemies to God, as that they directly hate themſelves, which they know is not true. Numbers who ſeemed to themſelves at peace with God, while under this miſtake, have been afterwards convinced, that they had been making lies their refuge.

The ground of controverſy on the part of men, is a ſupreme regard to their own intereſt. It is ſimilar, in this reſpect, to all thoſe controverſies among men, which originate in their ſelfiſh paſſions and luſts. Men have need only to be apprized of the truth, as to the real character and purpoſes of Jehovah, to ſee and know, that their hearts are in direct oppoſition to him, and his holy government. The truth of this may be illuſtrated by the following ſimilitude. A perſon, in whoſe vicinity I live, and who unites the moſt amiable character, with all the requiſite means of doing good, has a claim on me to a certain amount. The ſum due is not beyond my *ability* to pay, at any time, were I honeſtly diſpoſed. He notifies me of his claim, and that the payment cannot be diſpenſed with. I acknowledge his claim, in words, but ſtill delay the ſatisfaction; yea, am diſhoneſt enough to harbour a ſecret purpoſe of defrauding him out of the whole. This I reſolve to do, at leaſt ſo long as it can be done with ſafety to my per-

ſon and intereſt. My creditor, meanwhile, finds motives to improve every occaſion, for ſhewing me kindneſs. Theſe are daily furniſhed by numerous wants of mine, which he is careful to relieve, though unaſked. From all this I infer, that however juſt his claim, and whatever he may ſtill ſay of its being indiſpenſible, he is ſecretly determined to let it remain unſatisfied; yea, to diſpenſe, at laſt, with both principal and intereſt. Under theſe circumſtances, and miſtaking his true character, I ſeem to have great reſpect for him, and often ſpeak of him accordingly. I would reſent a ſuggeſtion of being at variance with him, or even of harbouring the ſeeds of an unfriendly thought towards him, in my heart. The time comes, however, when my creditor can no longer forbear, conſiſtently with his extenſive views of doing good, and promoting the general happineſs. He is hence led to take ſuch meaſures as convince me, that he feels himſelf wronged by my delays, and that his claim, ſo far from being relinquiſhed, muſt be ſatisfied; that in caſe of refuſal I muſt meet a proſecution at law, which will involve me in expence and ruin. I now diſcover, for the firſt time, that the whole of my ſeeming reſpect, and ſenſe of obligation, were founded in a falſe idea, that my indulgent creditor had too much partiality for me and my intereſt, ever to enforce his claim. But no ſooner am I convinced of the truth, than all my former feelings give place to reſentment and oppoſition. I labour to obliterate a ſenſe of paſt obligations, and to think myſelf juſtifiable, in pouring out complaints of hard uſage. My firſt ſtep is to find means of defence; yea I am reſolved that his claim ſhall be realized, only at the end of the law. It is now decided, that I have a controverſy with him, in earneſt. It is remarkable too, that all this takes place, *without the leaſt change of character, on either ſide.* My generous and long indulgent creditor has acted like himſelf,—from the pureſt motives, and in a manner, which all honeſt minds muſt approve. I too, am the ſelf-ſame character, and governed by the ſame motives as before. The apparent change, in my feelings and conduct, is a genuine reſult of the ſame motives, under the preſent change of circumſtances. Loving myſelf ſupremely, which is the ſource of every unrighteous controverſy, I am full of diſlike and enmity. Yea my feelings become implaca-

ble, to ſuch a degree, that with ſufficient power, I would not merely defraud him of his due, but ſpoil him of all he poſſeſſes, and enrich myſelf, by his entire ruin. The only reaſon, fairly aſſignable is, that my creditor will not ſacrifice, to my ſelfiſh and diſhoneſt wiſhes, what can be no longer diſpenſed with, conſiſtently with juſtice to himſelf, and with benevolence to the multitudes, who are always dependent on his charity.

The application of this ſimilitude is plain and eaſy. Miſtaking at once the character of God, and their own, men uſually flatter themſelves that they are at peace with him. They are too pure in their own eyes, and withal too blind to the plague of their own hearts, to admit, as poſſible, that theſe ſhould be fraught with enmity againſt him, though they defraud him every moment of his due. They can even imagine themſelves well affected towards God, and very thankful under the receipt of his mercies, while treaſuring up unto themſelves wrath, in the abuſe of them. But let the light break in upon their conſciences, ſo as to ſhew them the truth of facts; let them ſee, that the meaſures his infinite benevolence is taking, to promote his own glory and the happineſs of his holy kingdom, muſt be deſtructive of all their ſelfiſh ſchemes and hopes; that he has not remitted his claims to their whole hearts; that he holds them guilty and condemned, and for aught they have preſent reaſon to hope, will treat them as veſſels of wrath, fitted for deſtruction; yea, that there is no hope for them, but in his ſovereign and uncovenanted mercy;—let all this be realized, and the conviction will be inevitable, that theirs is the carnal mind, which is enmity againſt God. Of all this multitudes are, one time or other, convinced, to their confuſion and diſmay. Of this all muſt be convinced in time, or by the light of eternity, when there will be no hope.

In the view taken of this ſubject, we ſee the ſource of all the oppoſition which is felt, and often expreſſed, to the diſtinguiſhing and holy doctrines of the goſpel. We here ſee the only ſource of oppoſition to the doctrine of divine decrees, election, ſovereignty, and diſtinguiſhing grace. Theſe are doctrines revealed and clearly taught, in the word of God. As ſuch they belong to men. Were men's hearts right with God,—were theſe filled with that diſintereſted and holy love,

which is the fulfilling of the law, ſuch doctrines would be their rejoicing and hope. Did men love God with all the heart and repoſe anſwerable confidence in the perfect wiſdom and holineſs of his government, they could find no objection to his having foreordained whatſoever cometh to paſs; or to *his working all things after the counſel of his own will.* They would in like manner, acknowledge his right of doing what he will with his own, and be pleaſed, that he ſhould *have mercy on whom he will have mercy.* Knowing that all might otherwiſe be loſt, the coming and work of Chriſt notwithſtanding, they would be glad, with exceeding joy, that God had from the beginning, choſen ſome of mankind to ſalvation, through the ſanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth; —that theſe ſhould in due time be called, with an holy calling, and be to the praiſe of the glory of his grace. In the diſlike which is manifeſted to theſe doctrines, we may ſee and know men's oppoſition of heart to the true character of JEHOVAH, any profeſſions of the contrary notwithſtanding.

We further ſee, in the light of this ſubject, the fearful danger men are in of making lies their refuge, and thence being deceived, to their utter deſtruction. So long as they make ſhift to quiet their minds, with miſapprehenſions of the attributes and deſigns of God, they will never embrace the truth, as it is in Jeſus. This they will never do, nor feel the need of doing, till made acquainted with the exiſting controverſy between God and them. Hence, how important to be thoroughly convinced of the truth; The goſpel reconciliation will otherwiſe be fooliſhneſs to them, and thence be deſpiſed and neglected. As a proper and neceſſary mean of convincing men of the truth, of what vaſt importance, to exhibit the attributes and government of the bleſſed Jehovah, by the light of his word, and with theſe the glorious and diſtinguiſhing doctrines of his grace! Theſe are often made the wiſdom and power of God, to the ſalvation of ſouls. Though they fail of this effect on multitudes, every mouth will be ſtopped, the impenitent have no cloak for their ſins, and God be glorified in their juſt puniſhment.

Hence finally, how vaſt the duty and importance of reconciliation to God! Without this, there can be no peace nor ſalvation to the wicked. Without this, they could not enjoy

a moment's happineſs, though God ſhould admit them to dwell, eternally in the preſence of his glory! Continuing their controverſy with him, they muſt ere long ſuffer the dire execution of the ſentence, which is written for their admonition, *But thoſe mine enemies, who would not that I ſhould reign over them, bring hither and ſlay them before me.*

TROPHIMUS.

LETTERS FROM A POOR MINISTER.

To the Editor of the London Evangelical Magazine.

REV. SIR,

THE incloſed letter breathes ſuch an unaffected ſtrain of piety and ſubmiſſion to the divine will under very trying circumſtances, that it much impreſſes my heart; and ſhould it excite gratitude in our ſouls for more abundant mercies in Providence, or teach thoſe who are in ſimilar circumſtances with the author, to caſt their burdens upon the ſame Almighty, and never-failing Friend, you will not regret its inſertion in your Magazine.—I am ſure you will be glad to hear, that a few Chriſtian friends, into whoſe hands the letter unexpectedly came, have generouſly diſcharged the good man's debts, and ſent him a few pounds, and an ample ſupply of clothing for himſelf and family.—So true is that word, "The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles." Pſalm xxxiv. 17. Your's,

PHILEMON.

L——H——, *Nov. 26th*, 1800.

MY dear and Chriſtian friend in the Lord, but to me unknown, I received your kind, loving, and welcome letter, November 24. Being ſo loſt in wonder and ſurpriſe, that I know not how to expreſs myſelf, or form my letter to you as God's diſtributor to the poor of his flock with all your Chriſtian helpers: the Lord the Spirit help me to indite, and guide my poor hand in truth.—I have an enemy ſtands at my

back, whoſe name is Mr. Pride, and aſks me how I can for ſhame, as a Chriſtian Miniſter, ſtate my caſe (it being ſo unknown and deplorable) to the Church of Chriſtian friends abroad: but as God reſiſts the proud, and gives grace unto the humble, I bid him in the Lord's name, begone; for the Lord will have mercy on the afflicted, and I am perſuaded my dear friends will not ſcorn me becauſe of my poverty.

My dear Sir, had you brought in your kind letter to me, I ſuppoſe your breaſt would have heaved, your cheeks bluſhed, your eyes dropped, whilſt you would have exclaimed, "Alas my brother!"—I have a poor ſick and weak wife, who has been ill for almoſt fourteen years of the rheumatiſm in the ſtomach, windy cholick in her breaſt, dropſy in her legs, and ſometimes with hyſteric fits; and we have nothing to put in her mouth beſide a little water; but the water of life is very refreſhing. I have a daughter, my oldeſt child, who has been ill almoſt four years in a decline, and I am able to get very little or nothing for her; but cry to the heavenly Phyſician for help.—I have a poor ragged boy turned thirteen years, and the country is ſo poor, I cannot get any work for him; (even farmers pay off their ſervants, proviſions are ſo dear;) and to put him apprentice is out of my power; I muſt hope the Lord will hear my prayers in his behalf.—I have another boy, who is eighteen, at ſervice in a farmer's place, but his wages are ſo low, he cannot as yet do for himſelf.—My income in all is only ſixteen pounds per annum, (the London Exhibition, and his Majeſty's royal gift included) and the people are ſo poor, whom I ſerve, that they can afford me little or nothing, as they are loaded with large families, and ſome of them on the pariſh, and their children half naked; ſo that I can expect but little from them, poor dear things! As for our linen, both for back and bed, to ſay I have *none* would be falſe; but to ſay you would not thank me for it, would be true, for we are exceedingly bare of that article: yet we are happy to be clothed with the clean linen, the righteouſneſs of the ſaints.

O moſt bleſſed privilege! God make me humble and thankful!—As for my bedding, my dear friend, I muſt beg to be excuſed; but this I can ſay, through divine grace, the chamber is peace, the pillow is ſovereign love, the protector

is God and his angels, the canopy his Almighty goodneſs and providence: but I have a bed, homely as it is, and my dear Lord was pleaſed to go without one for it.—O! for more love and thanks to my dear Jeſus, who procured all my favours with his precious blood!—My family, as to clothing, are but very middling, but bleſſed be God for what they have.—As for our yearly fare; breakfaſt and ſupper are chiefly on a little tea, if we can get it; if not, on mint tea and bread, and a little cheeſe or butter, if it can be had; but very ſeldom are we favoured with it. Our dinner in the Spring and Summer is chiefly on creſſes, ſalt, and bread; cabbage and ſalt, and a little butter, when it can be had; yet a dinner of herbs, where the love of God is, is better than a ſtalled ox with hatred and ſtrife therewith. But my friend, the Paſchal Lamb, though eaten with bitter herbs, ſweetens every thing we enjoy, bleſſed be my God! Sometimes in the Summer we have garden beans and ſalt, carrots and ſalt, but little meat; for I think I can ſafely ſay, we have not had four joints of meat in our houſe theſe ten months; for, my friend, where muſt it come from? My firing ſtands me in almoſt four pounds per annum, and my houſe and garden two pounds per annum; coals and every thing is ſo very dear in this poor bare county. In the Winter, our dinner is potatoes and ſalt; on that I have dined this day with my family. This is our yearly living, and bleſſed be God for this! O, my friend, although I am often ſtraitened for bread on earth, I hope through grace, I ſhall never want water in hell; O, the happy thought!—As to my affairs they are too bad to ſpeak of, but I cannot help it, and what I am going to ſpeak is true. I am behind hand in the world almoſt eighteen pounds, and moſt of it for bread, ſome of it for other things; but the farmer that ſerves me, ſees when I receive two or three guineas I take it him, and ſo he bears with me. This is the Lord's doing, O! may it be ever marvellous in my eyes!—I am almoſt ſeventy-four years old, in health pretty well, but exceedingly weak; my wife is fifty-eight years; but ſhe, poor thing, enjoys but a very poor ſtate of health. The Lord prepare us both for a happy end! Amen. Sir, I muſt now tell you the price of proviſions in our county, and then you will not be ſurprized at my debt. Wheat, before harveſt was *1l.* 7*s.* and *1l.* 8*s.* per buſhel. Barley 15*s.* and 16*s.* per buſhel: and *now* wheat is at *1l.* 3*s.*

and 1*l.* 4*s.* per buſhel; barley at 14*s.* and 15*s* per buſhel; butter in the market 19*d.* and 20*d.* per pound; ſalt butter in the ſhops at 14*d.* and 15*d.* per pound; cheeſe in the market at 8*d.* and 9*d.* per pound, and in the ſhops at 11*d.* and 12*d.* per pound; potatoes 7*s.* and 8*s.* per buſhel.—The Lord have mercy on the poor, and take away all our ſins, which are the cauſe of all our ſorrows!—Dear friend, the poor are famiſhing to death! and now it is no wonder I am ſo much behind hand in the world; "but I hope the Lord will deliver me," Pſalm xxxiv. and xxxvii. ver. 3. and two laſt, with many more of the Lord's bank-notes, he will ſurely accompliſh. Now, my dear friend, I have given you a true ſtate of all my affairs, and the Lord knows it is true.

My wife and children join in love and thanks to you and all our dear friends in the Lord, praying God to bleſs you in all things and reward you. Such is the earneſt prayer of your's dear Sir, in the bonds of eternal grace.

Signed C. and A.——

To the Editor of the Evangelical Magazine.

REV. SIR,

With ſincere pleaſure I ſend you another letter from the Rev. C. B. whoſe affecting circumſtances are deſcribed in the laſt number of your Magazine, page 52. He is one of the ſeals of the late Rev. G. Whitfield's miniſtry, and an Evangelical miniſter of unblemiſhed character. Tho' 74 years of age, he walked laſt year ſixty miles from his poor habitation (according to his annual cuſtom) preaching as he went, in the moſt obſcure parts of the country. Surely ſuch a labourer in the Lord's vineyard ſhall never be forſaken by Him.

I am, Sir, your's,

PHILEMON.

February 5, 1801.

To Mr. G——.

L— T— H—, January 27, 1801.

"*I called upon the Lord and he heard me, yea he took me out of many waters, many ſorrows have encompaſſed me about, but the Lord hath delivered me out of them all.*"

My very dear and invaluable Friend in the Lord,

BEING ſo amazed at the Lord's providence, and your goodneſs, with all your helpers, that I am at a loſs to form my poor mite of love: may the Spirit of love and truth guide my heart and pen! My dear Sir, having with tears offered my poor mite of gratitude to my dear and heavenly Father, I now offer my thanks to you and all my other friends under God, for theſe your unexpected favours. This is the Lord's doing: O may it ever be marvellous in my eyes! God give me a thankful heart! Of the box of rich bleſſings we received, I have given Miſs W. an account. Many and rich they are, and have ſupplied food for our bellies, and clothing for our backs and beds; the Lord reward both you and your helpers!

Dear Sir, I received your kind letter, dated Jan. 9, 1800, but it came not to hand till the 23d, with a demand on my worthy friend, Mr. H. for 21*l* which we have received. But whence is this to me, that my God and his church ſhould thus look upon me, while many of our poor fellow creatures are ſtarving for want, and I and my family might juſtly have been in the unhappy number. O Lord, why me, why me! My dear friend, I have been under theſe waters for ſome years, and to all outward appearance could never have been releaſed, my place being ſo poor that the people can ſcarce make proviſion for the Lord's table, ſo I can expect but little from them; and proviſions ſo exceſſive dear for theſe five years, that fearing the Lord's name ſhould be ſlurred, I have laboured in my bed with conflicts, till my ſhirt has been wet on my back: nay, ſo have I fought with the Devil and unbelief, that I have walked the floor in the night, crying, "O Lord, I beſeech thee deliver my ſoul." Theſe two texts often followed me, Pſalm xxxvii. 3. and Pſalm l. 15. with many more: but the Lord hath raiſed you up for my deliverance.

Indeed, ſir, I ſcored up my dear Lord a great debt, but I little thought that he had given orders to you, and my dear friends (unknown to me) to remit it; but he knew both you and me, and my wants, and now you under him, as the executors of his goodneſs, have remitted it with honour. Bleſſed be his dear name, and thanks to you; the Lord reward you all. Amen!

And now, my dear friend, I will juſt give you a little ſketch of what, under God, you and your helpers have done; you have been the means of ſtopping the mouth of an accuſing Devil, daſhing unbelief out of countenance, treading carnal reaſon under foot, ſupplying the needs of the hungry, clothing the backs and beds of the naked, croſſing the books of creditors, ſtopping the mouths of enemies, and made me a wonder to all the country. You have ſet a pearl into all your crowns, delivered me and my poor family as out of a whale's belly, and once more ſet our feet upon dry ground. Bleſſed be our God, and thanks to you, for once more my feet ſtand upon even ground. I can ſcarce write for weeping. Your favour juſt cleared me from the world—*we paid fifteen pounds for bread*, and the reſt for other things. Men's ſhoes are ten ſhillings a pair; wheat is 1*l.* 4*s.* and 1*l.* 5*s.* per buſhel; and we cannot have two pounds of bread for a ſhilling. O! for faith to truſt the promiſe of my God! I hope he will yet deliver me.—I have one favour to beg, not to nouriſh my pride, nor to pleaſe a vain fancy—no; God forbid! It is for the glory of God, to ſend me a letter with all your names that have helped me, to rear up a monument in the hiſtory of my life, of God's goodneſs by your means, to inſcribe them as in a plate, for my dear children to view, when I am dead and gone; how a covenant-keeping God did deliver their poor father, and ſupported them according to Pſalm xlviii. 14. "That they may tell it to them that come after." O! my dear friends, let me beg a ſhare in all your prayers for us; and now, my dear friend, ſuffer me and my poor family as on our knees with tears in our eyes, to bleſs God for you, and that he may crown you all with every bleſſing. And now with tears farewell! the Lord bleſs you all, Amen!

I am your's in the Lord,

C. and A. B.—

To another benefactor, on the ſame occaſion, Mr. B. writes, "when the box of bleſſings came, I was ſo overwhelmed with joy, that, as our people emptied it, I could only ſtand and weep and praiſe the Lord."

[*From the Chriſtian Obſerver.*]

REMARKS ON BAXTER'S LETTER.

AN account has lately been publiſhed of "A revival of Religion" in the State of Kentucky, attended with circumſtances which render it peculiarly entitled to notice. A letter of the Rev. G. Baxter, principal of Waſhington College, dated the 1st of January 1802, ſtates, that a year before, the whole of that country was remarkable for vice and diſſipation, and a majority of its inhabitants were profeſſed infidels; but that, in the courſe of the ſpring and ſummer of 1801, ſuch ſalutary effects were produced by the preaching of the Baptiſts and Preſbyterian Miniſters, that Kentucky became an uncommonly moral place. "A profane expreſſion, it is ſaid, was ſcarcely heard; a religious awe ſeemed to pervade the country; and ſome deiſtical characters confeſſed, that, from whatever cauſe the revival might originate, it certainly made the people better. Its influence was no leſs viſible in promoting a friendly temper," whilſt a ſpirit of lively and fervent devotion was univerſally prevalent.

Thus far we rejoice, with every true Chriſtian, in the effects which appear to have been produced: they are the proper fruits of Chriſtianity. It is, therefore, with regret that we find the account to contain ſome things which are open to objection.

Aſſemblages have met for ſocial worſhip in the open air, conſiſting in ſome caſes of 8, 10, or 12,000, and in one inſtance, of 20,000 people; it became neceſſary for ſeveral miniſters to officiate at the ſame time, in different parts of the ſame congregation, and many of the hearers wandering from preacher to preacher, an appearance of confuſion and diſorder was created.

The length of the worſhip ſeemed another extraordinary circumſtance. "The people," it is ſaid "after they were

diſmiſſed, ſhewed a ſtrange reluctance at leaving the place; they generally continued ſome time in the meeting-houſe, in ſinging or in religious converſation." At Cane-Ridge they met on Friday and continued till Wedneſday evening, night and day, without intermiſſion, either in public or private exerciſes of devotion, and with ſuch earneſtneſs, that heavy ſhowers of rain were not ſufficient to diſperſe them. On other ſacramental occaſions, they generally continued on the ground until Monday or Tueſday evening; and had not the preachers been exhauſted and obliged to retire, or had they choſen to prolong the worſhip, they might have kept the people any length of time they pleaſed."

But by far the moſt remarkable circumſtance was, "that the people began to fall down in great numbers under ſerious impreſſions, even during the moſt ſolemn parts of divine ſervice," exciting, as might be expected, univerſal aſtoniſhment, and a curioſity which could not be reſtrained. Many crowded round the individuals who had fallen, in order to ſee how they were affected, and thus impeded the ſervice; until at length, "the falling down became ſo familiar as to excite no diſturbance. When perſons fell, thoſe who were near took care of them: and every thing continued quiet until the worſhip was concluded. At Cane-Ridge ſacrament not leſs than 1000 perſons fell proſtrate to the ground, among whom, it is added, "were many infidels." At another ſacrament, "the number that fell was thought to be more than 300."

The account given by Mr. Baxter of this phænomenon is as follows:—"Immediately before they (viz. the people who fall down) become powerleſs, they are ſeized with a general tremor, and ſometimes, though not often, they utter one or two piercing ſhrieks in the moment of falling. Perſons in this ſituation are affected in different degrees; ſometimes, when unable to ſtand or ſit, they have the uſe of their hands, and can converſe with perfect compoſure. In other caſes they are unable to ſpeak; the pulſe becomes weak, and they draw a difficult breath about once in a minute: in ſome inſtances, their extremities become cold, and pulſation, breathing, and all the ſigns of life forſake them for nearly an hour. Perſons who have been in this ſituation have uniformly avowed, that they felt no bodily pain; that they had the entire uſe of their reaſon and reflection; and when recovered, they could relate

every thing that had been ſaid or done near them, or which could poſſibly fall within their obſervation. Perſons have ſometimes fallen on their way from public worſhip, and ſometimes after they had arrived home; and in ſome caſes, when they were purſuing their common buſineſs on their farms, or when retired for ſecret devotion. Numbers of thoughtleſs perſons have fallen as ſuddenly as if ſtruck with lightning; many profeſſed infidels, and other vicious characters, have been arreſted in this way, and ſometimes at the very moment when they were uttering blaſphemies againſt the word. This falling is common to all ages, ſexes and characters."

We have felt conſiderable reluctance in bringing theſe ſtrange tranſactions to the knowledge of our readers, but conſidering ourſelves in ſome degree pledged to afford them a correct account of the ſtate of religion, we did not feel at liberty to overlook ſo material a piece of religious intelligence. We ſhould conceive, however, that we failed in our duty, if, while we exhibited the facts which have taken place, we omitted thoſe comments which a regard to truth, and to the intereſts of religion ſeem to us to require. We deem it the more neceſſary to do this, as the editors of the Evangelical Magazine have ſtated that account of Mr. Baxter, from which we have given extracts, and which they have given at length, to be *the moſt correct, judicious, and ſatisfactory they have ſeen*, and have not expreſſed their diſapprobation of any of the circumſtances which we have related.

In this repreſentation of Mr. Baxter's account we can by no means concur; for, to ſay no more, he ſeems to us to regard ſome appearances, which are of a very doubtful and ſuſpicious nature, as marks of converſion. The ſtrange occurrence, for inſtance, of falling down, is ſpoken of, not merely as a weakneſs to be tolerated, but as an effect to be rejoiced in of the preſence and power of God. No doubt ſeems to be expreſſed reſpecting the real converſion of thoſe who thus fell down; and although the circumſtance of falling down is not made the only evidence, yet it is brought forward in ſuch a manner as to imply, that it muſt be regarded as no very doubtful evidence of the operation of divine grace.

We are too well acquainted with the weakneſs and inconſiſtency of man, to argue, that ſuch extravagancies may not, in certain caſes, attend a real change in a man's religious

ſtate; but to regard them with complacency, as proper indications of ſincere converſion, is, on the moſt favourable ſuppoſition, to ſubſtitute mere animal feeling,—the effect of ſympathy or ſomething worſe, in place of the ſolid and eſſential graces of the Chriſtian character. If a man is taught to date his converſion from the period of his *falling down*, that ſtrange event will naturally acquire a vaſt importance in his eyes.—He will deſpiſe the more ſlow and ordinary methods of inſtruction, and he may even be influenced to continue in his former ignorance, by the circumſtance of his having a ſingular and ſurpriſing tale to relate, which, whilſt it is conſidered as placing his converſion beyond a doubt, may, notwithſtanding, tend to generate conceit, and ſpiritual pride; and by rendering him high-minded, may lead to a relapſe into ſin, and perhaps to a final apoſtacy.

Let it be remembered, in confirmation of the view now given, that very violent emotions are generally found to be ſhort-lived. The Rev. Mr. Edwards, Mr. Berridge, Mr. C. Weſley and others, who had an opportunity of narrowly conſidering the ſubject, were of a ſimilar opinion, and it has derived conſiderable ſupport from occurrences which, within the laſt ten years, have taken place in the Weſt-Indies. The writer of theſe remarks has himſelf known many who have ſuſtained, in what they were taught to conceive the moment of their converſion, bodily emotions of a ſimilar and no leſs violent kind; but truth compels him to ſtate, that though ſome good moral effects accompanied the event, in the end both the religion and the morality entirely diſappeared. Such, indeed, may be expected to be the effect of eſtabliſhing unſcriptural teſts of converſion.

It may alſo be remarked, that the appearances ſpoken of by Mr. Baxter as ſupernatural, appear to us to be perfectly natural. The ſympathetic nature of all violent emotions is well known to thoſe who have ſtudied the moral and phyſical conſtitution of man; and, in the caſe under conſideration, there are many things likely to increaſe its power and prevalence. When men are made to believe that falling down is a ſure, or even probable proof of converſion, they readily yield to the impaſſioned tones of the preacher, and encourage in themſelves a ſympathy with thoſe who ſcream and are falling down around them. This is true, eſpecially of weakly and nervous

perſons; and the want of ſleep, long faſtings, protracted attendance on divine worſhip, as well as crowded audiences, muſt greatly add to the effect. Miniſters, therefore, ought to be very fearful of uſing language which may lead uninformed or enthuſiaſtic minds to regard ſuch things as a probable indication, and ſtill more as a deciſive proof, of converſion.

It is a well known fact, that, in general, theſe ſtrange emotions are not ſo involuntary as they appear to be; for it has uſually been found to be very eaſy for the preachers to repreſs them, when they are inclined to do ſo.

Having already extended this article to a great length, we ſhall now bring it to a cloſe. But let us firſt requeſt any one, who may doubt the juſtice of the preceding obſervations, to weigh well this queſtion, Whether he can aſcribe to God, the God of order and wiſdom, ſuch wild and diſorderly effects as have been deſcribed? May they not even be the devices of that enemy who is emphatically called in ſcripture, "the Deceiver" of the world, who would thus delude men into a falſe eſtimate of their ſpiritual ſtate, and alſo bring into diſrepute the common, but far more valuable effects produced by the zealous and faithful preaching of the Goſpel?

[*From the New-York Miſſionary Magazine.*]

BAXTER'S DEFENCE.

Waſhington Academy, Sept. 9, 1803.

MR. DAVIS,

IN a late number of your Magazine, I obſerved a publication taken from the Chriſtian Obſerver, which contains ſome ſevere, and I think not very candid remarks on my letter reſpecting the Kentucky Revival. However unpleaſant it may be to enter into a public controverſy, particulary on this ſubject, I feel myſelf called upon by that publication, to correct ſome of its miſrepreſentations and erroneous ſtatements.

The moſt important charge which that writer makes againſt me, as the author of the letter in queſtion, is, that I have brought the falling down as a certain teſt of true religion, and have expreſſed "no doubt reſpecting the real converſion of thoſe who thus fell down."—To refute this charge, I ſhall

make two quotations from the letter itſelf, which exhibited my real opinion, ſo far as I intended, at that time, to expreſs an opinion on the ſubject. The quotations are as follow:

"But perhaps the moſt numerous claſs conſiſts of thoſe who fall under diſtreſſing views of their guilt, who ariſe with the ſame fearful apprehenſions, and continue in that ſtate for ſome days, perhaps weeks, before they receive comfort."

"As to thoſe who fall down under legal convictions, and continue in that ſtate, they are not different from thoſe who obtain convictions in other revivals, excepting that their diſtreſs is more ſevere." From theſe two paſſages, as well as from the general drift of the letter, I ſuppoſed it would naturally follow, that I conſidered the falling down as a concomitant of ſome kind of religious impreſſions, and in many caſes only as a concomitant of legal convictions. And I truſt every one knows, that legal convictions are not the ſame with converſion, and that in all revivals numbers come under ſerious impreſſions who never obtain true religion. And if I did not throw out any formal caution, to prevent a belief that falling down, and becoming religious, were the ſame thing, it was ſimply becauſe I had not met with any perſon in Kentucky, or elſewhere, who was ignorant enough to ſuppoſe they were. The clergy in Kentucky, ſo far from conſidering the falling down as a teſt of converſion, have been perhaps more cautious during the late revival, than on former occaſions, in examining young communicants reſpecting their faith and repentance, and all the conſtituents of real religion.

With reſpect to the immediate cauſes of theſe extraordinary bodily exerciſes, which have attended both the weſtern and ſouthern revivals, I have not been able to form any opinion very ſatisfactory to my own mind. When I firſt ſaw them, I thought them very ſtrange concomitants of divine worſhip, But they appeared ſo entirely involuntary, they came ſo ſuddenly and ſo irreſiſtibly on their ſubjects, and made ſuch havock among infidels and other vicious characters, that although unable to account for them, I did not think proper to oppoſe them. I was therefore obliged to overlook them altogether, and form my opinion of the work, from the views and exerciſes of the mind, which its ſubject ſeemed to poſſeſs.

In this, however, as in many other caſes, it is more difficult to ſay what the true cauſe is, than what it is not; and of all

theories which I have ſeen on this ſubject, I think that the moſt untenable which aſcribes theſe phenomena wholly to ſympathy. The *ſympathy* of ſuch a theory is like *chance* in atheiſtical ſyſtems; it has a great deal to do which it cannot poſſibly do. However, as this is the theory which the Chriſtian Obſerver has eſpouſed, I ſhall examine it a little by the common rules of philoſophizing. Let it be remembered, that in all our reſearches into nature, no ſecond cauſes are to be admitted, but ſuch as are known to exiſt, and ſuch as are ſufficient to account for the effects aſſigned to them. It is certain that ſympathy exiſts in a greater or leſs degree in every mind. So far then, and I think no farther, the Chriſtian Obſerver is on good ground; for it is equally certain, that ſympathy cannot account for the extraordinary appearances attending the weſtern and ſouthern revivals. I preſume it is agreed, that *ſympathy* is that principle of our nature which enables us to partake in the feelings of others. And when an object is preſented to excite this principle, and draw it into exerciſe, it is impoſſible to ſay how far it may go, or what effects it may not be able to produce. If I ſee an object in diſtreſs, ſympathy may communicate a ſimilar diſtreſs to my own mind; and by this principle, every paſſion, and perhaps many of the diſorders to which human nature is liable, may be tranſmitted from one perſon to another. But as ſympathy cannot operate without an object, it never could have begun ſuch a work as that in Kentucky: and ſhould the work once have ceaſed for a few hours, ſympathy could not again have brought it into operation. All therefore that can with truth be conceded to the friends of this theory, is, that one perſon ſhould have fallen proſtrate under religious impreſſions, another ſympathizing with him might alſo have fallen. But what occaſioned the proſtration of the firſt? Here it is evident that another cauſe muſt be ſuppoſed, wholly diſtinct from ſympathy, and ſufficient of itſelf to account for all the phenomena in queſtion:—And this cauſe muſt have begun the exerciſes at every ſociety or public meeting in which people have actually fallen. But as it is not only unneceſſary, but alſo unreaſonable, to multiply cauſes at this rate, ſo ſympathy ſhould not be introduced at all in ſuch caſes, unleſs when in the progreſs of the work, we diſcover the evident ſymptoms of its preſence.

But although I do not deny that ſympathy may have ſome influence in almoſt all revivals, yet many things have attended the falling down in Kentucky, for which it cannot account. It would hardly be ſuppoſed to operate much on deiſts and profligates, who attended with the profeſſed deſign of ridiculing the work: men do not often ſympathize with what they hate, and theſe people were not "*readily yielding to the impaſſioned tones of the preacher, and encouraging in themſelves a ſympathy with thoſe who were ſcreaming and falling down around them.*" Sympathy could not occaſion the exerciſes of thoſe who fell in their own houſes, or on their farms, or when retired for ſecret devotion. But perhaps the hardeſt caſe of all would be, that of a perſon arreſted in ſleep. Suppoſe a perſon to lie down in his uſual health, and awaking ſuddenly in the night, without any dream, to find his body powerleſs, and his mind crowded with the moſt ſerious ideas reſpecting religion.—I am credibly informed that ſuch caſes have occurred, and could ſympathy account for them!

But the Chriſtian Obſerver does not appear ſatisfied with his own theory, for in the concluſion of his remarks he tells us, we muſt not venture to impute theſe diſorderly effects to the God of order, and that we ſhould rather conſider them as the works of the devil. But I would wiſh to know here, whether it be ſuch a criminal diſorder for people to fall down when they are not able to ſtand? And if falling down be ſuch an act of diſorder as cannot originate from a real work of God, ought we not to doubt the religion of Daniel* and of St. John,† and alſo the converſion of St. Paul.‡ But before we impute this work to the devil, let the following facts be well conſidered. When this work proſtrates the infidel and the profligate (as it often does) they are conſtrained to pray like the publican, "God be merciful to me a ſinner." They warn their old companions of the danger of their former principles and practices, and tell them that nothing but the religion of Jeſus can give eaſe to a guilty conſcience, and ſecure their preſent and future felicity. And numbers who began their reformation from incidents of this kind, have now continued for ſome years to ſupport the characters of ſober, humble, orderly, and exemplary chriſtians. Let any man read

* Dan. x. † Rev. i. 17. ‡ Acts ix. 4.

his bible, and then ask himself whether these things can be the work of the devil. What, indeed, has the devil to do to annoy deistical minds with distressing apprehensions of their guilt, and make them pray to the Almighty in the language of gospel penitence?

But the Christian Observer supposes that "these strange emotions are not in general so involuntary as they appear to be, because it is very easy for the preachers to repress them when inclined to do so." On my part I am fully convinced that those in Kentucky were generally involuntary, and I will state the following reasons for my opinion:

1. Because there was no sufficient temptation to counterfeit them: they were not thought to be any test of real religion, and conferred no particular eclat on the characters of their subjects.

2. Because ignorant boys and girls who were the subjects of it, often personated the converted sinner or triumphant believer, more naturally and pathetically than perhaps the best stage-actor in the world could have done it.

3. Because a very large proportion of those who fell were decided and professed enemies of the work: and numbers of those were arrested and laid prostrate at the very moment they were reproaching others for falling. To illustrate this point, I shall exhibit a single instance, out of a multitude which might be produced. Two persons attended, on a sacramental occasion, to make their remarks. They separated in the congregation, but met again after the worship was concluded, and entered into conversation on the subject. One of them said he thought it must be a work of God: the other hastily replied, "I am persuaded it is a work of the devil." He had scarcely spoken this sentence when he felt his whole system unnerved; and tumbling headlong off a log on which he had been standing, narrowly escaped giving his head a severe stroke against a tree.

4. Because it frequently happened, that sober and elderly professors of religion, who were not enemies of the work upon the whole, but opposed the falling down as a disorderly matter, were among the first victims of its power, when the revival came into their neighbourhoods.

5. Because in some who fell, pulsation, breathing, and other symptoms of life disappeared for a considerable time. I was

not myſelf an eye-witneſs of ſuch caſes, but had information of them from good authority.

Theſe reaſons, I truſt, will be thought ſufficient to juſtify my opinion; though I am fully convinced, that it is impoſſible, by any repreſentation, to give ſuch ſatisfactory evidence of the involuntary nature of theſe exerciſes, as a candid ſpectator would obtain by the actual examination of them. But I will further remark, that the Chriſtian Obſerver ſeems to have formed his opinion on this ſubject, from his acquaintance with certain denominations of chriſtians, who voluntarily convert their worſhip into a ſcene of uproar and diſorder, on purpoſe to encourage, and, if poſſible, to produce extraordinary affections of the body. But I can aſſure him, and the public, that the appearance of things in Kentucky were very different. The people there, ſo far as I had an opportunity of obſerving them, met with gravity and compoſure; the miniſters proceeded to conduct the worſhip in the uſual way; their addreſſes indeed were often ſerious and pathetic; but there was nothing wild or extravagant in their manner of repreſenting divine truth. In this ſtate of things the people diſcovered great affection, and began to fall down, though without any noiſe, ſufficient to interrupt the worſhip. After the congregation was diſmiſſed, attention was paid to thoſe who had fallen; who ſometimes exhorted their friends, and recommended religion in the moſt affecting manner; but in other caſes requeſted the prayers of the clergy for themſelves. After prayers, hymns were generally ſung, and perhaps an exhortation given ſuitable to the occaſion. Theſe things appeared in a great meaſure unavoidable. To have left the people lying proſtrate and helpleſs on the ground, would have ſeemed cruel—to have refuſed praying for them when requeſted, would have been more cruel—and not to have heard them when recommending religion with a degree of earneſtneſs almoſt inconceivable, could hardly be thought decent. Theſe things, however, were what the enemies of the work called diſorder. But it may ſtill be a queſtion, whether all this would appear diſorderly to the Supreme Being; more eſpecially as it took place after the worſhip was concluded, and was done, ſo far as I could judge, with ſincere views to edification: —And I firmly believe, that if a ſacred regard to the apoſto-

lic precept, "Let all things be done decently and in order," could have prevented thoſe bodily exerciſes, they would not have prevailed in Kentucky. I do not remember to have met with any Preſbyterian there, either of the clergy or of the laity, who had not felt ſtrongly prejudiced againſt them on their firſt appearance. But when they ſaw them force themſelves into their congregations under the uſual means of grace, and ſuch as they thought it their duty to employ for the edification of the church, what could they do? There certainly was no way to put an effectual ſtop to the falling down, but by forſaking public worſhip entirely, or at leaſt by ſuppreſſing every thing which had the appearance of lively devotion.

The Chriſtian Obſerver makes a number of remarks in the eſſay under conſideration, in which I do not fully comprehend his aim. He appears much diſpleaſed with the people for aſſembling on ſacramental occaſions, to the amount of ten, twelve, or twenty thouſand—for dividing themſelves into ſeparate auditories, and having the worſhip conducted at different ſtands at the ſame time, and for continuing ſo long upon the ground. Theſe things, together with the falling down, are comprehended under one general cenſure, but whether the writer eſteemed them all equally bad, cannot be eaſily collected from his publication.

As to the falling down, if that were a criminal matter, on whom ſhall the criminality be fixed? The clergy appointed their ſacraments as they thought moſt convenient, and if the people choſe to attend, to the number of ten, twelve, or even twenty thouſand; I do not know that any one was in duty bound to prevent them. And when the aſſemblies became ſo large that one miniſter could not addreſs them, what could they have done better than to erect different ſtands at ſuch diſtances, that the ſpeakers might not interrupt each other, and conduct the worſhip at different places—and with reſpect to encamping on the ground, that was a matter of neceſſity, however it might correſpond with their inclinations. If people at a diſtance choſe to attend ſacraments upon ſome of the moſt important theatres of the revival, where they knew the neighbourhoods could not poſſibly accommodate all the ſtrangers, they were certainly not to be blamed for bringing their waggons and accommodating themſelves. And let it be re-

membered, that the encampments were conducted with so much caution, as to be liable to no objections in point of decorum. It is true, indeed, that a cenſorious and reſtleſs ſpirit, which always condemns every thing connected with religion, made ſome clamour at firſt on this ſubject: but the good order obſerved on thoſe occaſions, has reduced it to ſilence.

Upon the whole, ſir, I am ſtill of the opinion, that the weſtern revivals are among the greateſt of which we have had any account. If ſome conſequences, rather diſagreeable, ſhould grow out of the uncultivated ſtate of religious ſociety, let thoſe who have it in their power correct them as far as poſſible—let others impute them to their proper *cauſe*—and let every one be moſt modeſt and cautious about condemning a work which carries the manifeſt ſignature of a divine and almighty agent. It is always difficult to conduct a revival to the beſt advantage. It is peculiarly ſo in a place whoſe population is compoſed of emigrants from different countries, poſſeſſing different habits, and many of them ignorant even of the firſt principles of revealed religion. However, I am happy to ſtate, that the Kentucky revival is ſtill producing its uſual and beneficial effects. A ſimilar one has broken out, ſome weeks ſince, in the ſtate of Tenneſſee, and perhaps with greater power than any which have preceded it. As to the Cumberland revival, this is the ſixth ſummer ſince its commencement; and I am told it is ſtill in progreſs, and that inſtances of apoſtacy are not numerous. This is longer than I have known any other revival to continue, and ſeems to refute the opinion, that, "violent emotions are ſhort-lived." However true it may be in common matters, that what is powerful will not be laſting, yet in genuine revivals of religion, it will be as God Almighty pleaſes.

I have now, MR. DAVIS, ſent you a few haſty remarks, in defence of myſelf, and of the Kentucky revival. I ſhould have been willing to have entered into this ſubject more fully, and with greater accuracy, but a variety of preſſing engagements, made it impoſſible to do ſo at this time, and I did not wiſh to delay my anſwer. I ſuppoſe the diſcuſſion will ſtop here; but if it ſhould not, I entertain a hope, that I ſhall not be obliged in future, to deal with an anonymous writer.

Your's, with the higheſt eſteem, GEO. A. BAXTER.

MR. CORNELIUS DAVIS.

[*For the Western Missionary Magazine.*]

LINES,

Occasioned by the death of the Rev. DAVID SMITH, *one of the Editors of the Western Missionary Magazine, who departed this life the 24th of August,* 1803.—*Inscribed to his Widow.*

AT length the voyage of life is o'er;
He's gone, and will return no more;
(Relentless Death has clos'd the scene:)
No more the words of Truth impart,
Or speak peace to the wounded heart,
In Gospel language, mild, serene.

A faithful Shepherd o'er the sheep,
His MASTER gave in charge to keep;
He watch'd them with paternal care:
He pointed out the road to Heav'n:
Of *pard'ning blood*, and sins forgiv'n,
He spake, and bade them not despair.

He's gone! yet ah! why should we mourn,
Or wish that he could still return?
Has not KING JESUS call'd him home?
There to enjoy the fruits of *Faith*,
And triumph in his SAVIOUR's death,
For endless ages yet to come.

Thus all the children of his Grace
Will stand before their MAKER's face,
And each receive the Victor's crown
Amidst the shining ranks above,
Where ev'ry heart is tun'd to *Love*,
And sin and sorrow are not known.

Then thou, the partner of his cares,
Cease, cease to weep—dry up those tears;
Grieve not as those who have no *Hope*:
Look up to GOD; on him depend;
The Orphan's *Guide*, the Widow's *Friend*;
He'll safely keep, and bear thee up.

"Thy MAKER is thy *Husband*" still;
Be then resign'd unto His will;
Rely on His supporting hand:
His *Promise* is forever good:
'Twas made in *Mercy*—seal'd with *Blood*;
HIMSELF is pledg'd that it shall stand. O.

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